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ABSTRACT

This report examines the condition of formal education among the Sami people (Lapps) in Norway. Part I discusses developmental phases in the formal education of indigenous minorities: (1) initial rejection of formal education imposed by the majority society; (2) gradual acceptance of formal education as the minority becomes acculturated and urbanized, sometimes accompanied by a rejection of native language and culture; and (3) revitalization of the traditional language and culture, a process often nurtured by the majority society within the school system. Part II discusses Sami schooling within this framework and describes bilingual education efforts, school financing and organization, specialization of teacher education for the Sami school, and school governance by Sami councils. Part III weighs questions of educational equity and the feasibility of cultural revitalization for a small cultural minority group, and suggests differences in the situation at the individual and societal levels. Part IV outlines a systematic framework for investigating these questions at the societal level and for determining economic, organizational, and administrative solutions. (SV)

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SERIES III

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FINANCING, ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Studies of Selected Population Groups

Linguistic and Indigenous Minorities:

The Sami (Lapp) Case in Norway

(Note by the Secretariat)

1. This paper, circulated for information and comment, has been prepared by Anton Hoem, Assistant Professor of Education, Institute for Educational Research, University of Oslo, in his role as expert contributor to the study of the Financing, Organisation and Governance of Education for Special Populations. This project, which is assisted by a grant from the Educational Finance Programme of the U.S. National Institute of Education, has three main components - Country Surveys of Current Practice; Analysis of Principles and Issues; and Studies of Some Priority Groups (Linguistic and Indigenous Minorities) - and is the second phase of CERI's current activity in the area of school-level educational resource allocation.

2. The views expressed are those of the author and do not commit either the Organisation or the national authorities concerned.

SUMMARY

This report is one of a group of case studies of cultural and linguistic minorities, prepared as the third element of the project dealing with the Finance, Organisation and Governance of Education for Special Populations. The general pattern for case studies of linguistic minorities is to give an introductory overview of language and literacy problems in the country or area selected for study, outline the historical evolution of policies as they affect one or more populations selected for study, then provide an analysis of policies and specific educational measures along the dimensions: objectives, legal status, financial arrangements, organisational structures and governance. Authors then provide a critical analysis along with, where possible, conclusions regarding future implications and possibilities of international comparisons.

The report by Anton Hoem sets out to provide an account of some traits of the situation of the Sami people in Norway.

THE SAMI (LAPP) CASE IN NORWAY

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I. Ethnic Minorities and Formal Education: Theoretical Considerations

(a) The past

There has never been a society in which socialisation has not taken place. Transmission of knowledge, upbringing of individuals with a view to responsible citizenship, institutions for cultural inheritance have existed for a long time. However, the socialisation processes, their institutionalisation and other types of institutions have shown a wide variety of pattern when viewed historically.

As a rule, one can say that the simpler a society is the fewer are its institutions. At the start, the complexity and manifold character of the single institution were inversely proportional to the number of institutions in a society. The simple hunting society, for instance, had few institutions and none of which was specialised for a single function. Thus, the development from a simple to a complex society can well be described as a development from multifunctional and general to unifunctional and specialised institutions (Hoem, 1978).

An obvious example of a single specialised institution is the school, the development of which into a specialised educational institution has occurred relatively late in history. In all small scale societies that have existed in different degrees up to modern time, the school is a new and foreign innovation. These societies existed without schools until the missionaries and others from abroad came and established them for their children. This has led to problems at both individual and society level.

At the individual level, the teachers and schoolmasters were met with practically no understanding of the great importance they attached to formal education. On the other hand, the local parents received little understanding from the school authorities for their own particular priorities of knowledge and skills. To close this gap (often called the cultural barrier), various pedagogical methods have been tried, the main difference between them being the degree the minority culture has been used as an educational tool. In this, the main element of the minority culture that has been employed is its language. Alternatives have been tried between teachers from outside and teachers recruited locally, between big and small schools, between different ways of organising the school year. The financing of the school has mainly been from outside - an especially interesting feature because it shows how foreign the school really was to the societies in which it was implanted.

The school, as introduced to the minority populations we have in mind, was based upon urban areas with dense populations. Scattered populations, however, demanded small schools with few divisions or larger boarding schools. New ways of arranging the school were also created to meet the needs of different population patterns. At the same time, the school was developed in a society where learning and work were separate. As long as this was not the case in small scale societies, different systems within the school were adopted to give the older children an opportunity to take part in family life and thus get traditional knowledge of work at home. Thus far, the development can be summed up in the statement that the school is a sub-system of a total system where the degree of integration in the total system defines the way and degree of function (Hoem 1980, 512).

As long as the school was a foreign innovation in a small scale society and not an integral part of it, the minority group tried not to be affected by it. At individual level, this showed itself in minimal school attendance, passivity during classes and poor recruitment locally to the teacher profession. At society level, the result was lack of investment - both economically and culturally. It is reasonable to draw the conclusion, then, that in this period the school was a poor agent for the transmission of culture and knowledge. It is surprising in these circumstances that the establishment of urban institutions in rural districts has been so little questioned. Why was a system of formal education established in a society where informal learning was sufficient and natural? The lack of adequate evaluation of the consequences of these schools, and the gross overestimation of their effect on the traditional minority culture, can be explained, I think, by looking no further than the experience of the single individual. All children were involved with school for shorter or longer periods of time and they all either liked or disliked it. It was in the majority society that the school was largely "liked", and this because of the importance traditionally attached to it in their particular culture. Still at the individual level, let us remember too that those with their professional careers linked to education had special reason to advocate the importance of school, both at home and abroad.

(b) The present position

The school, however, never functions alone. It has always entered the small scale society along with other institutions from nearby more complex and larger societies. At a certain point, therefore, the ethnic minority can no longer regard it in a mainly negative way, sooner or later it emerges clearly as a positive resource. This happens most often when the technical and economic integration of the ethnic minority has

developed so far that this minority's present and its future lies in an urban and industrialised society. For the single family the school becomes a necessity when, as we have seen, work and learning are divided and traditional ways of acquiring knowledge are no longer enough to give understanding of the total society into which the minority has been absorbed. The school then acquires a second function of great importance for the minority, namely the maintenance and transmission of its own culture. It also becomes a resource for an individual career for the minority man or woman in the new, complex and urbanised society.

These end-terms may sound somewhat in conflict. The reason for this is that, while the school has now become an organised and integrated part of the incipient urbanisation and industrialisation of the minority society, culturally it still remains foreign. Changes do not take place at the same rate in the various sections of a society. This is true for ethnic minorities as well as for all groups of people. Changes are most rapidly brought about in technical and economical spheres and more slowly in social and cultural values. This is true in spite of the fact that participation in technical and economic innovation is often dependent on mastery of the language of the majority. At individual level this sometimes leads to a rejection of native language and culture and an over-estimation of the language and culture of the majority. In this situation a revitalisation of the traditional culture of the minority, especially its language, often occurs. The problem then is that economic and social life represent an urban, industrialised society based on human conditions more than on the natural conditions traditional to a small scale society. The fundamental basis for the minority culture no longer exists, nor do the central institutions that maintained it. The traditional culture then has to be nurtured and further developed in accordance with the (probably quite different) characteristics of a new and alien society.

For the educational and cultural sector at macro level, this situation will raise questions like this: Is the minority to be fully responsible for the development of the educational system, based on their own traditional culture, and should the majority at the same time provide the economic, administrative, and general resources needed for this task? Put in a different way: in this situation, cultural and educational questions at the macro level are bound to concern the cultural and political autonomy of the minority. At individual level, pedagogical questions will be raised as to how and in what degree the individual pupil can be helped by his own and the foreign culture to become resourceful and active in the new society.

Regardless of the political solutions to these questions, the minority school will demand considerable resources to assure its equality with the majority school. Such equality means either a school based upon and developed out of the traditional

society (although the notion of school is foreign to this society) or a school based upon and developed in accordance with the existing society with the prevailing mixed- bi- or multi- lingual environment. In addition to this demand, there is another claiming a pedagogically superior school that will rapidly and effectively promote an assimilation of the minority into the majority. Regardless of which alternative is chosen, the development must correspond closely with the general social development of the minority society. This means that a school based upon the traditional society and the minority culture is doomed to failure if the general development of the minority is in the direction of assimilation.

All three of these alternatives for the development of a school are relatively expensive. If the policy aim is to maintain and develop the culture and lifestyle of the minority, it follows that the minority should get its own educational and cultural institutions equal and additional to those that already exist. This must be attained by the minority, but with economic and technical help from the majority society. Less comprehensive is the assimilation alternatives, which are, therefore, less demanding in all respects - for instance, the educational system will be worked out mainly by the majority society.

If an educational and cultural policy aimed at revitalizing the minority culture and lifestyle is to have a fair chance of success, the general social development must, as we have seen, go along with this same policy. The size of the minority is also a factor of importance. For instance, it is scarcely likely that a minority of less than 50,000 people will be able to run all the institutions and attend to all the different interests that arise in modern society without assistance from outside - that is, from members of the majority culture.

II. The Sami People and the School

1589 is usually taken as the year when the first order calling for formal education for Sami people arrived from outside (Dahl, H. 1975, NOU 1980:5). Since then a Norwegian educational system has been developed in the Sami districts which in many ways has been remarkable (Hoem 1980). Particular ways of financing the schools have been developed that assure building standards equal to the rest of the country. To motivate Sami students to become teachers, scholarships have been offered and possibilities for educational specialisation have been opened up. A written Sami language and literature have been evolved, while in the schools, the role of the language has changed in accordance with the views taken from time to time as to the proper pedagogic role of minority languages in teaching. The schools in the Sami districts are, therefore, part of the national educational system, both in organisational and economic terms. An important exception are the boarding schools which were established in 1905 with special sources of financial support.

Today, the educational policy takes as its starting point the social and cultural situation of the Sami population. Their total number in Norway is difficult to estimate, but the current assumption is that there are about 30,000 of them, half of whom live in Finnmark, the most northern county. Northern Norway as a whole has 90 per cent of the Sami people, most of them in districts with scattered populations. The development of the inner part of Finnmark, however, has resulted in a more dense urbanised society. Simultaneously, there has been a steady circulation of Sami people between traditional Sami districts and the bigger Norwegian cities. Of the total population only about ten per cent are concerned with reindeer herding; the rest are employed in the ordinary industries of the country. Taking into consideration that reindeer herding, both technically and economically, is highly integrated into the national system, it is reasonable to say that the present occupational and economic situation of the Sami people is no longer rooted in their old traditional way of life.

Of the total population it has been estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 have Sami as their first language (NOU 1980:55, p. 12-13). Most of these people (about 75 per cent) belong to the North Sami language group; the remaining 15 per cent speak Lule Sami. The South Sami people are more or less completely norwegianised so far as language is concerned. In these districts, the distinctive features of ethnical affinity are reindeer herding and where one lives.

Although it is possible today to identify the Sami people geographically and by language, they do not constitute a specific entity in terms of international law and are fully integrated into the political and administrative system of the country. In recent years, however, Sami organisations have grown up on both national and Nordic bases. These organisations have been especially active in questions of cultural policy and law. In the central Sami districts in the northern part of Norway where the Sami people are in majority, they also have the majority in political decisions by the local authority - the relative size of different groups throughout the country deciding where political power is placed at the local level. In Norway as a whole, however, the Sami people have always been a miniscule minority and have consequently never obtained any direct influence.

Nevertheless, the Sami people are exerting increasing influence on national policy through their organisations and by representation on important boards and committees. In the local councils where they are in majority, they also have a decisive influence on the management of their schools. This extends, in accordance with the national system, to educational planning, educational materials, teacher education, financial planning and the organisation of individual schools. Since 1967 Sami for beginners has been taught in the schools of the central Sami

districts. The pupils who choose Sami for beginners get lessons in Norwegian as a foreign language. Later on, they can choose which one of the two they want to have as first or second language. This is also valid for the secondary school. Children with Norwegian as their mother tongue can also choose Sami as their second language.

The National Standard Plan of Primary Education which regulates all teaching in Norwegian Primary schools does not take education in the Sami districts into consideration. This means that work has to be done at local level to adjust it to the needs of the Sami schools. In addition to the pedagogical challenge represented by this task, the situation has led to economic problems as well.

The number of pupils in each class in the Norwegian school is standardized in relation to the amount of work the teaching of Norwegian speaking pupils in a homogenous class represents. On this basis, the school is financed by national and local budgets. A normal sized Norwegian class numbers 30 pupils. In the Sami districts a functional class will consist of 10 to 20 pupils. This is paid for after special applications each year. To find out about the most appropriate number of a class a combined experiment with increased lessons and reduced number of pupils in each class has been tried out. Together with new rules of financing and new ways of organising within the school, new educational materials in Sami language have been attempted. This again has led to an increased need for adequate teaching plans and for an adequate teacher education. The development of teaching plans, educational material, educational methods, and education of teachers is a national responsibility.

Since 1974 the practical work of development and specialisation of teachers' training for the Sami school has been done in Alta. Among the matters that have been of interest for the teachers' training course is whether the school should have different teachers for Sami and Norwegian. Another important matter for discussion relates to schools of multi-cultural teaching: should they employ the system of form masters or of subject teachers? There has also been an attempt to achieve a common pedagogy for teachers in pre-primary and those in primary schools. Possibilities have also been developed for secondary education. Since the primary schools for the Sami people are directed towards the present society in the Sami districts, the question has been raised as to how teachers' training is to be developed in relation to the Norwegian society and the Sami culture. For the staff in the department of Sami teachers' training, knowledge of Sami language and culture has been the most important qualification. For the students one has seen general teacher education as the most important educational aim. Education in the Sami districts is now classed as a subject for specialisation.

In 1975, the Sami Council of Education was established. Before then, the responsibility of pedagogical development in the Sami school was in the hands of the Advisory Board for primary schools in general - namely, the National Council for Primary Schools. Today, responsibility for the professional development of the school system in the Sami districts has passed into the hands of the Sami Council of Education, and among its important tasks is educational planning. Since the schools in the Sami districts aim at the Norwegian society and the Sami culture, an important task is to decide on the relative distribution of educational topics and educational time. For both Norwegian and Sami subjects, it is necessary to create new plans involving new subject combinations. Likewise new learning materials must be developed in both Sami and Norwegian and for this a combination of experts and practising teachers has been engaged. In fact, a hindrance so far has been a lack of teachers and experts, and whether or not to take Sami people out of teaching to do developmental work presents quite a dilemma. If they are, the teaching of Sami children must be taken over by Norwegian speaking people who have not had the advantage of a teachers' training course. All this mainly concerns the North Sami districts.

Parallel to the development of educational plans and materials has been a search for new organisational patterns. Reduction in the number of pupils to match an increase in the number of lessons has already been mentioned. Another innovation is a regrouping of pupils to correspond with their level of achievement in different subjects.

Closely connected to this is expansion of the financing system. In Norway each local council is responsible for the daily running of its primary school, but the expenses are covered by the state in accordance with the economic situation of the local society. For the Sami districts, this means that the state meets all the expenses of the primary schools. An urgent task today is to find a norm for expenses of the Sami school and to get it accepted nationally. Another new task for the Sami Council of Education is an analysis of requirements for the various parts of the school system. For this to be worthwhile, however, adequate finance and qualified personnel must be assured.

The establishment of South Sami schools will be an altogether different matter because this will involve cultural revival in a district where even the language is more or less dead and the Sami population amounts to no more than 3,000 people, if that. What is more, they are spread over a large area and it would be impossible to establish a school in every neighbourhood.

III. Discussion

Both the Norwegian authorities and the Sami organisations are working for the principal of equality in the schools in the Sami and Norwegian districts. This means equality of possibilities and equality of results for each pupil whether his or her mother tongue is Sami or Norwegian.

At the macro level, the situation is different. The Norwegian primary school relates to the Norwegian society, and only this. The primary schools in the Sami districts, however, have both the Norwegian and Sami societies as their frame of reference. This means that while the Norwegian society has its own school, in the cultural sense the Sami society does not, so for them there is neither equality of possibilities nor equality of results.

This survey of the situation in Northern Norway shows, we believe, that the approach to the financing, organisation and governance of education for indigeneous minorities adopted by Professor Frank Darnell (1979) needs further elaboration if it is to cover the case of the Sami people. Equality of possibilities and results at micro level need, by no means, be the same at macro level. Darnell distinguishes between the two levels when he is considering questions of finance, organisation and governance, but he looks at pedagogical and cultural questions in no more than a micro perspective. Here we have shown that problems involved in education need to be examined at both levels - macro and micro.

In the Norwegian Sami districts proper development of the school has been resolved pragmatically. In reply to the demand for equality at micro and macro level, the response of the Sami school may seem modest; but in the light of what is physically possible, it is all too easy to become over-ambitious.

In defining the Sami school at the beginning of this paper, we stressed that the degree of integration of the minority into the larger society will determine its function. On the other hand, it follows also that the establishment of a school will lead to the development of other Sami institutions. The teaching of the Sami at school presupposes some form of Sami language institutes. The teaching of Sami literature presupposes specialised publishing and printing houses. Living Sami literature presupposes Sami theatres, radio and television. All this presupposes Sami organisations and bureaucracy to take care of the various cultural activities, and this in its turn presupposes Sami people with various educational backgrounds. The education of Norwegians in Sami language and culture to help such cultural revival and development is, in principle and in practice, a non-starter. If there is to be revitalization of Sami culture, this must be brought about by the Sami people themselves. Otherwise it will end up as an advanced form of museum activity.

Here we come to the heart of the matter: How large must the Sami population be if the traditional culture of a nomadic people engaged in hunting and fishing is to have a reasonable chance of growing in an urbanised and industrialised society? To start with, the lack of human resources is a visible obstacle to such a cultural development. The same individuals are seen in the various institutions, in the educational system and in cultural life in general.

Another knotty matter is control and management. Darnell touches on this in his question 4 (Darnell 1979). As far as one can see, increased state grants are not leading to increased state control over the Sami school - on the contrary; but as the Sami school develops closer integration results with that part of the Norwegian economic and cultural life associated particularly with the Norwegian school. The consequences of this seem inescapable: since the school is an urban phenomenon, the establishment of a Sami school will promote urbanisation of the Sami society. Over this process, the Sami people will have little control, solely because of their relatively small number. Partial governance over the cultural life of the Sami people through normal operation of the national economic system is not necessarily a negative factor; but it will make a revival of Sami culture on Sami premises a much more difficult process.

In a search for common elements in the problem of education for ethnic minorities, it seems that pedagogical thinking offers the best approach for comparisons at the individual level. It is here, for instance, that attempts have been made to achieve some degree of equality. It is, however, far more difficult to find common elements at the macro level. These difficulties do not lie so much in differences between ethnic minorities as in differences between majority societies. If one compares, for instance, the educational systems of the ethnic minorities in Alaska with the schools in the Sami districts, the extent to which the financial arrangements for the latter are more stable and less flexible than in Alaska is most striking. The question of control, governance and organisation is not so acute in the Sami school, on the other hand, the concentration of resources around pedagogical and cultural qualities, which might be called the inner life of the school, is the big difficulty.

IV. Suggestions for Future Work

At the present juncture, more attention must be given to educational questions at the societal level. As a start, we suggest:

(i) In relation to cultural revival and development, one of the first tasks is to find variables that indicate the minimum size a minority must have if the desired development of school and society shall have any chance of success.

(ii) Parallel with (i) must be a recognition of such cultural institutions as must be established in a small-scale society if a minority cultural school is to be started.

(iii) Following this, the optimal accordance between the developmental level of the school and of the minority must be determined.

(iv) A fourth task might well be the development of parameters indicating the time needed for a real improvement of pedagogical standards.

The results from such work should then be regarded from an economic, organisational and administrative point of view to find optimal solutions.

At the individual level, it should be of value:

(i) to find ways of teaching that had the local culture of the pupils as its starting point, and yet was seen in relation to the national culture;

(ii) to find a way of calculating the costs per pupil, when the starting point is teaching for equality for the pupil of the ethnic minority - in other words for equal possibilities and equal results;

(iii) to find indicators for grouping of pupils when they represent differing degrees of ethnocultural adherence;

(iv) to find a form of teacher education that in the best possible way combines the social advantages of the form master with the professional advantages of the subject teacher.

All these studies should throw light on the various aspects of pedagogical method, teaching plans, teaching materials and school building. They also have bearing on the economic dimension.

These few points are suggestions for starting points for future work. Yet, though suggestions, they are not occasional for they are deduced from a theoretical framework and consequently show a systematical pattern and indicate priorities. The theoretical basis can be concentrated thus: The possibilities of the school are determined by the society of which it is a part. The possibilities open to the pupils are determined by their own achievement and the pedagogical qualities of the school.

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